



BRAD SHERMAN
UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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December 10, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

I am writing to request that the Environmental Protection Agency immediately investigate the unresolved gas leak at the Southern California Gas Co. natural gas storage facility in Aliso Canyon. I ask that the Environmental Protection Agency investigate the cause of the leak, and propose action to mitigate the threat to public health, and expedite the leak's repair.

For over six weeks, noxious gas emanating from a leaking well has been sickening residents of the Porter Ranch neighborhood of Los Angeles, causing headaches, nose bleeds and dizziness¹². A preliminary Environmental Health Assessment by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has confirmed the health threat, noting the "neurological, gastrointestinal, and respiratory symptoms that may result from the inhalation." More than 2,800 residents have inquired about relocation and over 1,200 have already relocated. The situation will only worsen, as Southern California Gas Co. estimates that the leak could continue for months.

The California Air Resources Board estimates that the leak is responsible for nearly 25% of California's daily methane emissions; as you know, methane is an important cause of global climate change. I am also concerned about reports of radon gas and benzene being released into the air.

An immediate investigation has become necessary due to the prolonged period of the leak, the apparent health impacts, and the lack of certainty over when the leak can be stopped.

I am aware that 40 CFR § 68.3 excludes storage facilities from regulation under the Risk Management Program. However, we believe that 42 U.S. Code § 7603, which allows the EPA to "issue such orders as may be necessary to protect public health or welfare or the environment," controls the determination here. A statutory provision inherently trumps any regulation. To be even clearer, the statute explicitly states, "Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the Administrator... may... take such other action as may be necessary."

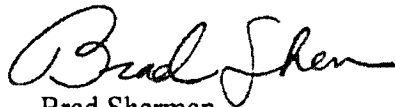
¹ Mendoza, Javier. "Natural gas leak that's sickening Valley residents could take months to fix." *Los Angeles Times*. November 20, 2015.

² Favot, Sarah. "Health officials: Porter Ranch gas leak may cause long-term health effects." *Los Angeles Daily News*. December 2, 2015.

Accordingly, it seems clear that you have the statutory authority to:

1. Commence an investigation,
2. Determine all necessary steps to protect the environment and public health, and
3. Require Southern California Gas Co. to implement all such steps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Sherman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

CC:

Department of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources
California Public Utilities Commission
South Coast Air Quality Management District
Los Angeles City Councilman Mitchell Englander
Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich